First Proclamation of the Provisional Government of AZAD HIND

(SONAN, 21st October, 1943.)

AFTER their first defeat at the hands of the British in 1757 in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of one hundred years. The history of this period teems with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice. And, in the pages of that history, the names of Sirajuddoula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haider Ali, Tipu Sultan and Velu Tampi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peshwa Baji Rao of Maharashtra, the Begums of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Atariwala of Punjab and last, but not least, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaj Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Sahib—among others—the names of all these warriors are for ever engraved in letters of gold.

UNFORTUNATELY for us, our forefathers did not at first realise that the British constituted a grave threat to the whole of India and they did not therefore put up a united front against the enemy. Ultimately, when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation, they made a concerted move—and under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857, they fought their last war as free men. In spite of a series of brilliant victories in the early stages of this war, ill-luck and faulty leadership gradually brought about their final collapse and subjugation. Nevertheless, such heroes as the Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib live like eternal stars in the nation's memory to inspire us to greater deeds of sacrifice and valour.

FORCIBLY disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror and brutality, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while—but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, there came a new awakening. From 1885 till the end of the last World War, the Indian people, in their endeavour to recover their lost liberty, tried all possible methods—namely, agitation and propaganda, boycott of British goods, terrorism and sabotage—and finally armed revolution. But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately, in 1920, when the Indian people, haunted by a sense of failure were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the new weapon of non-co-operation and civil disobedience.

FOR two decades thereafter, the Indian people went through a phase of intense patriotic activity. The message of freedom was carried to every Indian home. Through personal example, people were taught to suffer, to sacrifice and to die in the cause of freedom. From the centre to the remotest villages, the people were knit together into one political organisation. Thus, the Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again. They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1937 to 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministries in eight provinces, they gave proof of their readiness and capacity to administer their own affairs.

THUS, on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India's Liberation. During the course of this war, Germany with the help of her allies has dealt shattering blows to our enemy in Europe—while Nippon, with the help of her allies has inflicted a knock-out blow to our enemy in East Asia. Favoured by a most happy combination of circumstances, the Indian people today have a wonderful opportunity for achieving their national emancipation.

FOR the first time in recent history, Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. They are not only thinking and feeling in time with their country men at home, but are also marching in step with them, along the path to freedom. In East Asia, in particular, over two million Indians are now organised as one solid phalanx, inspired by the slogan of Total Mobilisation. And in front of them stand the serried ranks of India's Army of Liberation, with the slogan "Onward to Delhi" on their lips.

HAVING goaded Indians to desperation by its hypocrisy and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the good-will of the Indian people altogether and is now living a precarious existence. It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of that unhappy rule. To light that flame is the task of India's Army of Liberation. Assured of the enthusiastic support of the civil population at home and also of a large section of Britain's Indian Army and backed by a gallant and invincible allies abroad—but relying in the first instance on its own strength, India's Army of Liberation is confident of fulfilling its historic role.

Now that the dawn of Freedom is at hand, it is the duty of the Indian people to set up a Provisional Government of their own, and launch the last struggle under the banner of that Government. But with all the Indian leaders in prison, the people at home totally disarmed—it is not possible to set up a Provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the aegis of that Government. It is, therefore, the duty of the Indian Independence League in East Asia, supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad to undertake this task—the task of setting up

His Excellency NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE reading the first Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Major-General A. C. CHATTERJEE and Major-General M. Z. KIANI are standing next to him.

a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) and of conducting the last fight for freedom, with the help of the Army of Liberation (that is, the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army) organised by the League.

HAVING been constituted as the Provisional Government of Azad Hind by the Indian Independence League in East Asia, we enter upon our duties with a full sense of the responsibility that has devolved on us. We pray that Providence may bless our work and our struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland. And we hereby pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of her Freedom, of her welfare, and her exaltation among the nations of the world.

IT will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian people.

THE Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty, as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past.

IN the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice—we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and to strike for India's Freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and all their allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in Final Victory—until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a Free Nation.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind:—

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE, Head of the State, Prime Minister and Minister for War, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army.

Capt. Miss Lakshmi (Women's Organisation), S. A. Ayer (Publicity and Propaganda), Lt.-Col. A. C. Chatterjee (Finance), Lt.-Col. Aziz Ahmed, Lt.-Col. N. S. Bhagat, Col. J. K. Bhonsle, Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh, Lt.-Col. M. Z. Kiani, Lt.-Col. A. D. Loganathan, Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir, Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz (Representatives of the Armed Forces); A. M. Sahay, Secretary (with Ministerial Rank), Rash Behari Bose (Supreme Adviser); Karim Gani, Debnath Das, D. M. Khan, A. Yellappa, J. Thivy, Sardar Ishar Singh (Advisers); A. N. Sarkar (Legal Adviser).

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